

October 27, 1962

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF A LETTER BY THE PRESIDENT
ADDRESSED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE
PRESIDIUM OF THE USSR SUPREME
SOVIET, NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV

October 27, 1962

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have read your letter of October 26th with great care and welcomed the statement of your desire to seek a prompt solution to the problem. The first thing that needs to be done, however, is for work to cease on offensive missile bases in Cuba and for all weapons systems in Cuba capable of offensive use to be rendered inoperable, under effective United Nations arrangements.

Assuming this is done promptly, I have given my representatives in New York instructions that will permit them to work out this weekend -- in cooperation with the Acting Secretary General and your representative -- an arrangement for a permanent solution to the Cuban problem along the lines suggested in your letter of October 26th. As I read your letter, the key elements of your proposals -- which seem generally acceptable as I understand them -- are as follows:

- 1) You would agree to remove these weapons systems from Cuba under appropriate United Nations observation and supervision; and undertake, with suitable safeguards, to halt the further introduction of such weapons systems into Cuba.
- 2) We, on our part, would agree -- upon the establishment of adequate arrangements through the United Nations to ensure the carrying out and continuation of these commitments -- (a) to remove promptly the quarantine measures now in effect and (b) to give assurances against an invasion of Cuba. ... I am confident that other nations of the Western Hemisphere would be prepared to do likewise.

If you will give your representative similar instructions, there is no reason why we should not be able to complete these arrangements and announce them to the world within a couple of days. The effect of such a settlement on easing world tensions would enable us to work toward a more general arrangement regarding "other armaments", as proposed in your second letter which you made public. I would like to say again that the United States is very much interested in reducing tensions and halting the arms race; and if your letter signifies that you are prepared to discuss a detente affecting NATO and the Warsaw Pact, we are quite prepared to consider with our allies any useful proposals.

But the first ingredient, let me emphasize, is the cessation of work on missile sites in Cuba and measures to render such weapons inoperable.

October 27, 1962

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have read your letter of October 26th with great care and welcomed the statement of your desire to seek a prompt solution to the problem. The first thing that needs to be done, however, is for work to cease on offensive missile bases in Cuba and for all weapons systems in Cuba capable of offensive use to be rendered inoperable, under effective United Nations arrangements.

Assuming this is done promptly, I have given my representatives in New York instructions that will permit them to work out this weekend -- in cooperation with the Acting Secretary General and your representative -- an arrangement for a permanent solution to the Cuban problem along the lines suggested in your letter of October 26th. As I read your letter, the key elements of your proposals -- which seem generally acceptable as I understand them -- are as follows:

- 1) You would agree to remove those weapons systems from Cuba under appropriate United Nations observation and supervision; and undertake, with suitable safeguards, to halt the further introduction of such weapons systems into Cuba.
- 2) We, on our part, would agree -- upon the establishment of adequate arrangements through the United Nations to ensure the carrying out and continuation of these commitments -- (a) to remove promptly the quarantine measures now in effect and (b) to give assurances against an invasion of Cuba. I am confident that other nations of the Western Hemisphere would be prepared to do likewise.

If you will give your representative similar instructions, there is no reason why we should not be able to complete these arrangements and announce them to the world within a couple of days. The effect of such a settlement on easing world tensions would enable us to work toward a more general arrangement regarding "other armaments", as proposed in your second letter which you made public. I would like to say again that the United States is very much interested in reducing tensions and halting the arms race; and if your letter signifies that you are prepared to discuss a detente affecting NATO and the Warsaw Pact, we are quite prepared to consider with our allies any useful proposals.

But the first ingredient, let me emphasize, is the cessation of work on missile sites in Cuba and measures to render such weapons inoperable under effective international guarantees. The continuation of this threat, or a prolonging of this discussion concerning Cuba by linking these problems to the broader questions of European and world security, would surely lead to an intensification of the Cuban crisis and a grave risk to the peace of the world. For this reason I hope we can quickly agree along the lines outlined in this letter and in your letter of October 26th.

(s) John F. Kennedy

DRAFT FOLLOWS

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have read your letter of October 26 with great care. I find in it the indications of a willingness on your part to seek a prompt and peaceful solution to the present crisis.

I would suggest, in the light of your letter, that the elements which might be included in such a solution are the following:

1. You would undertake immediately to cease work on the offensive missile bases in Cuba and would promptly render inoperable all weapons systems in Cuba capable of being used

Territory of any nation of the western hemisphere.
against the ~~soldiers of the~~ United States or any Latin American country.

2. You would agree to remove such weapons systems from Cuba under appropriate United Nations observation, and supervision.

3. You would

3. You would undertake, with suitable safeguards, that you would not in the future introduce such weapons systems into Cuba.
4. Upon the establishment of adequate arrangements through the United Nations to ensure the carrying out of these commitments:
 - (a) we, on our part, would undertake promptly to remove the quarantine measures now in effect.
 - (b) We would undertake to give binding assurances to respect the territorial integrity and ~~and imminent~~ political independence of Cuba, and I am confident that other members of the Organization of American States would be prepared to do the same, likewise, if Cuba, in turn, were to give binding assurances that it would not seek, through military aggression or subversion, to interfere in the affairs of other American states.

I have given my representatives in New York instructions that will permit them today to work out an arrangement along these lines with the Acting Secretary General and your representatives. If you will give your representatives similar instructions, there is no reason why we should not be able to complete these arrangements and announce them to the world no later than tomorrow. ~~I look forward to your prompt reply.~~

Once this has been accomplished I would be prepared promptly to meet with you to discuss ways in which we might concretely resolve other issues.

As I was preparing this letter I learned of your
public message attempting to connect NATO bases and Cuba.

I must tell you frankly that this is not a way to get forward
with a settlement of the immediate crisis. The immediate crisis
is in Cuba, and it is there that very prompt action is necessary.

When we get agreement there, I shall be very ready to discuss
wider issues.